

# Paul Cummings Induction in the BYU Hall of Fame

## **1986 Hall of Fame Inductee**

A world-class long-distance runner and recipient of the 1974 Cougar Club Competitor Award, Paul Cummings did not always see running as his strength.

He played basketball in junior high, and wanted to continue in high school, but failed to make the team. However, when he came in first in his P.E. class in the mile run, a new opportunity opened up for him; he was asked to join the track team, and by his senior year he was running the mile with the second best time in California, seventh best in the country.

Running for BYU, Cummings was named All-American five years in a row. His junior year he became the NCAA champion in the mile run. Coach Clarence Robison said Cummings was "a great performer and has great courage. He's a tenacious, fierce competitor."

In 1976 he won the gold medal in the two-mile event at Los Angeles's Sunkist Invitational Track Meet. The following year he won it in the mile. Also in 1977, Cummings, representing the U.S., won Canada's Tri-Country Indoor Track and Field Meet, competing against Canada and the Soviet Union.

Cummings was the first Intermountain Area runner to break the four-minute mile, and has done so several times, setting a Madison Square Garden record in 1976. His personal best for the mile is 3:56.4

Hoping to go to the 1980 Olympics, after a regime of five hours of workout, six days a week, while working full-time, Cummings was one of many athletes disappointed by the U.S.'s boycott of the Games being held in Moscow that year. Finally, in 1984, Paul was able to compete in the 10,000 meter run in the Olympics held in Los Angeles. His qualifying time was the fastest on the U.S. team.